

Exercise

Swimming, cycling, jogging, skiing, aerobic dancing, walking or any of dozens of other activities can help your heart. They all cause you to feel warm, perspire and breathe heavily without being out of breath and without feeling any burning sensation in your muscles. Whether it is a structured exercise program or just part of your daily routine, all exercise adds up to a healthier heart.

The Benefits of Daily Physical Activity

- Reduces the risk of heart disease by improving blood circulation throughout the body
- Keeps weight under control
- Improves blood cholesterol levels
- Prevents and manages high blood pressure
- Prevents bone loss
- Boosts energy level
- Helps manage stress
- Releases tension
- Improves the ability to fall asleep quickly and sleep well
- Improves self-image
- Counters anxiety and depression and increases enthusiasm and optimism
- Increases muscle strength, increasing the ability to do other physical activities
- Provides a way to share an activity with family and friends
- Establishes good heart-healthy habits in children and counters the conditions (obesity, high blood pressure, poor cholesterol levels, poor lifestyle habits, etc.) that lead to heart attack and stroke later in life
- In older people, helps delay or prevent chronic illnesses and diseases associated with aging and maintains quality of life and independence longer

Tips for Exercise Success

- If you've been sedentary for a long time, are overweight, have a high risk of coronary heart disease or some other chronic health problem, see your doctor for a medical evaluation before beginning a physical activity program.
- Choose activities that are fun, not exhausting. Add variety. Develop a repertoire of several activities that you can enjoy. That way, exercise will never seem boring or routine.
- Wear comfortable, properly fitted footwear and comfortable, loose-fitting clothing appropriate for the weather and the activity.
- Find a convenient time and place to do activities. Try to make it a habit, but be flexible. If you miss an exercise opportunity, work activity into your day another way.
- Use music to keep you entertained.
- Surround yourself with supportive people. Decide what kind of support you need. Do you want them to remind you to exercise? Ask about your progress? Participate with you regularly or occasionally? Allow you time to exercise by yourself? Go with you to a special event, such as a 10K walk/run? Be understanding when you get up early to exercise? Spend time with the children while you exercise? Try not to ask you to change your exercise routine? Share your activity time with others. Make a date with a family member, friend or co-worker. Be an active role model for your children.
- Don't overdo it. Do low- to moderate-level activities, especially at first. You can slowly increase the duration and intensity of your activities as you become more fit. Over time, work up to exercising on most days of the week for 30-60 minutes.
- Keep a record of your activities. Reward yourself

